

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 T-03 AID-20

IO-13 RSR-01 DPW-01 /130 W
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O R 101145 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8502

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

COMUSMACV

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 3926

. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE SITUATION REPORT MARCH 10

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO
THE EMBASSY AS OF 2000 MARCH 10.

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SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

I. ICCS: PLENARY SENDS REPORT OF FIRST COMPLETED INVESTIGATION
(TRI TOM) TO FPJMC; CANDEL TO COMMENT ON KHE SANH NON-
INVESTIGATION

II. FPJMC: NVA AND ARVN PW RELEASES REPORTEDLY ON SCHEDULE

III. GVN/ PRG BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS: GVN DELEGATION NAMED
OFFICIALLY

IV. OFFICIAL GVN COMMENT: FONMIN DISCUSS PARIS CONFERENCE
ON TV

V. MR 1: ARVN PW RELEASE SITE ESTABLISHED IN QUANG NGAI;
COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC INCREASES ON QL 1

VI. MR 2: PRESIDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS RE: ICCS/ FPJMC BEING
IMPLEMENTED; MILITARY ACTIVITY UP SLIGHTLY

VII. MR 3: MR 3 ARVN OFFICERS SPECULATE ON PRG REASONS FOR
NON- PARTICIPATION IN FPJMC; GVN OFFICIALS NOT SURE CEASE-
FIRE AGREEMENT IS " GVN VICTORY"

VIII. MR 4: MILITARY ACTIVITY CONTINUES RELATIVELY HEAVY;
VC AND GVN POLITICAL MOBILIZATION BUILDS UP

PART I: ICCS

1. THE PLENARY SENT THE REPORT OF THE TRI TOM INVESTIGATION
FORWARD TO THE FPJMC. IT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A CANADIAN AND
INDONESIAN STATEMENT REGARDING POL AND HUNGDELS ORIGINAL
RELUCTANCE TO MAKE THE INVESTIGATION AND DRAWING
CONCLUSIONS, WHICH THE REPORT ITSELF DOES NOT REPEAT NOT DO,
ON THE ORIGINS OF THE ATTACKS. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST
COMPLETED INVESTIGATION ON A CEASEFIRE VIOLATION.

2. THE PLENARY ALSO SENT FORWARD A RECORD OF THE DECISION ON
THE SA HUYNH INVESTIGATION WITH STATEMENTS BY THE VARIOUS
DELEGATIONS.

3. THE MARCH 9 ICCS PLENARY AGAIN DISCUSSED THE KHE SANH
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NO - INVESTIGATION. CANDEL MADE A STATEMENT WHICH WILL BE CONVEYED
TO THE FPJMC GIVING ITS VIEWS ON WHY AN INVESTIGATION SHOULD
TAKE PLACE AND THE LACK OF VALIDITY OF THE POLISH AND
HUNGARIAN ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT. AMBASSADOR GAUVIN REPORTEDLY
PLANNED A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE SUBJECT TODAY.

PART II. FPJMC

DURING THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF PHASE TWO PW RELEASE, A TOTAL

OF 1500 NVA PW WERE TRANSPORTED FOR RELEASE AT CAMP EVANS IN MR 1. OF THESE, FOUR DECIDED TO REMAIN IN RVN. TODAY'S SCHEDULE CALLS FOR THE RELEASE OF 800 NVA PW AT CAMP EVANS AND AN ADDITIONAL 500 AT BONG SON, IN BINH DINH, NORTHERN MR II, AND ALSO FOR THE RELEASE OF 200 ARVN PW AT BONG SON. AS OF 1730 HOURS LOCAL, PW RELEASES WERE REPORTED TO BE PROCEEDING PER SCHEDULE, BUT DETAILS WERE UNAVAILABLE.

PART III: GVN/ PRG BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

OFFICIAL VIET- NAM PRESS MARCH 10 PUBLISHED NAMES OF DELEGATES GOING TO PARIS FOR GVN/ PRG BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS, CONFIRMING LISTING IN MARCH 9 SITREP (SAIGON 3881).

PART IV; OFFICIAL GVN COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES PARIS CONFERENCE ON TV

FOREIGN MINISTER LAM APPEARED ON SAIGON TV MARCH 9 TO DISCUSS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIET- NAM. HIS REMARKS REFLECTED STATEMENTS HE HAS PREVIOUSLY MADE TO PRESS IN EUROPE AND VIET- NAM. HE LAMENTED FACT THAT COMMUNIST OPPOSITION HAD PREVENTED IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS MADE BY GVN AND OTHER NATIONS PRESENT BUT SAID THAT CONFERENCE DID ESTABLISH RECOGNITION OF A MORAL GUARANTEE FOR PEACE IN INDOCHINA. LAM CLAIMED CREDIT FOR MENTION OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO SELF- DETERMINATION IN ARTICLES 2, 4 AND 5 OF FINAL ACT, WHICH HAD BEEN OPPOSED BY COMMUNISTS, AND FOR ITEM IN ARTICLE 9 ASSERTING THAT SIGNATURE OF FINAL ACT DID NOT IMPLY GOVERNMENTAL RECOGNITION OF ALL PARTICIPANTS BY EACH OTHER. HE ALSO REGRETTED REJECTION OF GVN PROPOSAL THAT ARMS SUPPLIES TO BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIET- NAM BE LIMITED TO THE ACTUAL NEEDS OF EACH NATION, FOR WHICH COMMUNIST DELEGATIONS RESPONSIBLE.

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PART V: MR 1

1. MAJOR ACTIVITY IN MR 1 WAS IN AIRBORNE AND 1 ST DIV AO'S WHERE 17 ATTACKS BY FIRE (ABF) OCCURRED WITH OVER 500 MORTAR ROUNDS RECEIVED. THERE WERE TOTAL OF 37 INCIDENTS INCLUDING 31 ABFS A SLIGHT REDUCTION OVER THE PREVIOUS DAY. ARVN INTELLIGENCE CONTINUES TO REPORT NVA ROADBUILDING AND INCREASED SUPPLY MOVEMENTS IN A SHAU VALLEY, THUA THIEN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 3926

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE SITUATION REPORT MARCH 10

2. PO OFFICER IN QUANG NGAI REPORTS THAT PROVINCE CHIEF
COLONEL NGO VAN LI SAYS AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ON SITE
FOR THE PROPOSED RELEASE OF ARVN PRISONERS. SITE IS NEAR
HIGHWAY 5 B, 7 KM WEST OF QL 1 ALONG MO DUC/ DUC PHO BORDER.
WHILE NO LIST OF PRISONERS HAS BEEN RECEIVED, GVN OFFICIALS EXPECT
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150 TO BE RELEASED MARCH 10 AND AN EQUAL NUMBER TO BE RELEASED
AT THE SAME LOCATION ON MARCH 16. GVN OFFICIALS
EARLIER REJECTED RELEASE SITE TWO KM WEST OF QL-1
BECAUSE THEY FEAR THE PRG MIGHT USE THE OCCASION OF PRISONER
EXCHANGE TO ASSERT POLITICAL CLAIM TO THE AREA. GVN OFFICIALS
HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL NOT COUNTENANCE RECOGNIZED PRG
PRESENCE IN ANY AREA WHERE COMMUNIST TROOPS COULD LATER
THREATEN STRATEGIC QL 1.

3. IN QUANG NGAI, ONE RANGER BATTALION AND TWO 105 MM GUNS HAVE BEEN MOVED INTO THE VALLEY WEST OF SON HA DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS TO INTERDICT THE ROAD BEING BUILT BY NVA. ACCORDING TO ARVN 2 ND DIV CHIEF OF STAFF COLONEL KHIEU, RECNET VNAF AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS CONFIRMED THE PRESENCE OF NVA WORK CREWS AND FOUND INDICATIONS OF RECENT HEAVY TRAFFIC ON THE FOUR METER WIDE ROAD.

4. LTC VANG, CO OF THE 5 TH REG, ARVN 2 ND DIV TOLD ARRO MARCH 7 THAT HE EXPECTS ENEMY TO LAUNCH ANOTHER ATTACK ON SA HUYNH COUPLED WITH SIMULTANEOUS ATTACK IN THE MO DUC/ DUC PHO BORDER AREA WITHIN MONTH' S TIME. VANG EXPECTS THE ATTACK WILL BE SUPPORTED BY ENEMY ARMOR BROUGHT IN FROM KONTUM BUT BELIEVES ARVN IS CAPABLE OF HOLDING ITS OWN.

5. TRAFFIC FROM QUANG NGAI AND BINH DIH HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE THE REOPENING OF QL-1 SOUTH OF SA HUNH. POLICE REPORTS INDICATE DAILY AVERAGE OF 80 TO 100 COMMERCIAL TRUCKS AND BUSES TRAVELING THE ROAD IN BOTH DIRECTIONS.

PART VI : MR2

1. FEED- BACK FROM THIEU' S MAR 6 MEETING WITH PC' S GENERALLY REFLECTS OTHER REPORTING. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THIS REGION IS THIEU' S REPORTED PROHIBITION OF ANY FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST FPJMC BUT SANCTION FOR ORDERLY PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS TO FPJMC (AND ICCS). THIEU ALSO UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE SAID DRV ELMENTS OF FPJMC COULD BE ALLOWED TO TOUR PROVINCIAL CITIES AND TOWNS BUT MADE NO MENTION OF PRG IN THIS CONNECTION.

2. DARLAC PC, A LAGGARD IN LOOKING AFTER ICCS, MUST HAVE ABSORBED STILL ANOTHER OF THIEU' S POINTS, SINCE HE HAS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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SCHEDULED RECEPTION AND TOURS FOR BMT TEAM (VISITING RECENTLY EMBATTLED BUON HO DISTRICT LAST). RELIEF EFFORTS IN BUON HO PROCEEDING WELL. VICTIMS WITH COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE OF GVN OFFICIALS AND OF VOLUNTEERS FROM NEIGHBORING HAMLETS, ARE SALVAGING AND REBUILDING. FINAL ESTIMATE OF DWV IN BUON HO IS 8,345 PERSONS (2009 FAMILIES).

3. ICC S: PHU YEN PC CONTINUES HIS PURPOSEFUL PROGRAM OF OUTINGS AND MEETINGS FOR TUY AN ICCS TEAM. TEAM HAS MET WITH PROVINCE COUNCIL, CVT, AND NUMEROUS VILLAGE/ HAMLET OFFICIALS AND RESIDENTS.

4. NHA TRANG ENTRY- POINT TEAM REQUESTED BRIEFING BY ARRO LIAISON OFFICER WITH KHANH HOA PROVINCE MAR 9. BASIC THEME WAS GVN CIVIL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS BUT

QUESTIONS RANGED FAR AFIELD. INDOBELS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SIZE AND DEPLOYMENT OF RF/ PF, ROLE OF PSDF, ETC. POLDEL FOCUSED QUESTIONS ON GVN JUDICIAL PROCESSES AND ON US ECONOMIC AID TO SVN AND HOW IT IS SPENT AND MONITORED. ENTIRE TEAM TOOK COPIOUS NOTES. THIS ICCS TEAM HAS ALSO ENGAGED IN PERFUNCTORY MONITORING OF ROKA REDEPLOYMENT FROM NHA TRANG AIR BASE, ESSENTIALLY COMPARING NUMBERS BOARDING WITH NUMBERS MANIFESTED. TEAM DID NOT ARRIVE, HOWEVER, UNTIL ROKA REDEPLOYMENT (SCHEDULED TO CONCLUDE MAR 14) WAS MORE THAN HALF COMPLETED.

5. ARVN 45 TH REG BEING WITHDRAWN FROM DARLAC MAR 10, LEAVING DEFENSE OF PROVINCE TO TERRITORIALS AND PSDF WHO HAVE UGRADED ALERT STATUS BECAUSE OF SEVERAL MINOR ENEMY- INITIATED INCIDENTS THIS WEEK.

6. ENEMY ACTIVITY MAR 9 ROSE SOMEWHAT OVER POST- CEASEFIRE LOW OF MAR 8. THERE WAS RENEWAL OF CONTACT NEAR BONG SON, BINH DINH NEAR WHERE PW EXCHANGE BETWEEN GVN AND PRG IS DUE TO START TODAY. IN PHU YEN, THERE WAS ALSO CONTACT MAR 9 BETWEEN VC AND ELEMENTS OF 86 TH RANGER BN. DELAYED REPORT INDICATES EXEC OFFICER OF 86 TH RANGERS KILLED BY SNIPER MAR 6.

PART VII: MR 3

1. MEMBERS OF MR 3 MILITARY STAFF ARE SPECULATING ON REASONS WHY PRG HAS NOT MANNED ALL OF ITS ALLOTTED SPACES IN THE FPJMC. MOST BELIEVE IT IS A PLOY AND THE PRG WILL SUDDENLY
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APPEAR IN FULL STRENGTH JUST PRIOR TO THE TERMINATION OF THE 60- DAY PERIOD. OTHERS FEEL THERE IS BAD BLOOD BETWEEN THE DRV AND THE PRG. STILL OTHERS ARE OF THE OPINION THAT THE PRG IS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY IN TRYING TO PERSUADE CADRE WITH SOUTHERN ACCENTS TO REVEAL THEIR IDENTITIES, THUS RUNNING RISK OF BEING TARGETED OR SUBJECT TO HARASSMENT. MINH HIMSELF SHARES VIEW THAT THE PRG WILL INDEED APPEAR, THAT IT WILL USE THE TPJMC FORUM FOR PROPAGANDA AND POLITICAL PURPOSES, AND THAT THE DRV, WITH ITS IN- PLACE NVA TROOPS, WILL BE WAITING IN THE WINGS TO SEE WHAT DEVELOPS BEFORE DECIDING ON WHETHER TO RESUME MILITARY OPERATIONS.

2. MILITARY ACTIVITY HAS AGAIN FLARED UP IN BEN CAT DISTRICT, BINH DUONG, LAI KHE RECEIVED 16 ROUNDS ON MAR 9 WHILE 5 TH DIV FIRE BASE WEST OF BEN CAT TOOK NEARLY 100 ROUNDS THE SAME DAY. ARVN COMPANY THEN RECEIVED GROUND ATTACK AS IT WAS PULLING OUT OF ITS EXPOSED POSITION. THE FIRE BASE SAT ASTRIE THE BEN CAT/ TRI TAM ROAD, THAT THE GVN HOPES TO OPEN

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O R 101145 Z MAR 73

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AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 3926

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE SITUATION REPORT MARCH 10

THIS SPRING. ANOTHER SHELLING INCIDENT JUST SOUTH OF
BEN CAT WAS WITNESSED BY THE ICCS TEAM. A CANADIAN DELEGATE,
HOWEVER, CONFIDED THAT HE SUSPECTS THE ARVN MAY HAVE FIRED
FIR S T.

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3 . THE BINH DUONG PROVINCE CHIEF PLANS TO ESCORT THE
ICCS TEAM ON VISITS TO ALL PARTS OF PROVINCE DURING THE
NEXT WEEK OR TWO, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE GVN CONTROL OF
POPULATED AREAS. GVN OFFICIALDOM, APPARENTLY IMPRESSED BY

THE RECEPTIVITY OF THE ICCS DELEGATES, OW SEEM DETERMINED TO BE FRIENDLY. COMMANDER, ARVN ENGINEERS' SCHOOL, HAS ISSUED A LUNCHEON INVITATION, WHILE LOWER HOUSE DEPUTY PHUC HAS REPORTEDLY INVITED THE CHIEF HUNGDEL TO JOIN HIM IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES ON A TOUR OF THE AREA.

4. THE GIA DINH PROVINCE POLITICAL STRUGGLE COMMITTEE (PSC) HELD A MEETING MARCH 9. THE PROVINCE CHIEF ATTENDED, BUT THE MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY LTC FROM THE POL WAR DIRECTORATE. THE THEME WAS THE SAME AS AT ALL SUCH MEETINGS: THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS A VICTORY FOR THE GVN. WHAT WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS MEETING, HOWEVE R, WAS THE QUESTION- AND- ANSWER SESSION.

THE PROVINCE POLICE CHIEF, IN FRONT OF THE ASSEMBLED GVN OFFICIALS STATED THAT THE PARIS AGREEMENT WAS DEFINITELY NOT A GVN VICTORY, THAT THE GVN' S CURRENT LINE OF PROPAGANDA WAS ON E-SIDED AND WOULD NOT BE BELIEVED BY THE PUBLIC, AND THAT THE RVN' S CONSTITUTION, WHICH FORBIDS DEALING WITH THE COMMUNISTS, SHOULD BE UPHELD RATHER THAN THE PARIS AGREEMENT. A HEATED DEBATE THEN BROKE OUT, WHICH WAS FINALLY ENDED BY THE PROVINCE CHIEF, WHO STATED THAT THE PARIS AGREEMENT DID NOT CONFLICT WITH THE CONSTITUTION, AND LET' S GET ON WITH THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE. COMMENT: SUCH A DEBATE CONFIRMS WHAT CONGEN REPORTED EARLIER, THAT THE GVN MADE MISTAKE IN TRYING TO SELL AGREEMENT AS GVN VICTORY. IF IT WERE PRESENTED AS THE COMPROMISE THAT IT IS, THE GVN WOULD ESTABLISH SOME CREDIBILITY WITH THE PEOPLE, AND WITH ITS OWN OFFICIAL S. TRYING TO SELL IT AS VICTORY IS NOT CONVINCING ANYONE, AND IS APPARENTLY EVEN ALIENATING SOME OF ITS OWN OFFICIALS.

5. OTHER GIA DINH POLITICAL MOBPIZATION EFFORTS INCLUDE USING RD CADRE TO ROUND UP FAMILIES WHO HAVE RELATIVES WITH THE VC, AND HELPING THE FAMILIES WRITE LETTERS TO THE VC " DEMANDING THE IMMEDIATE RLEASE OF RELATIVES FROM VC RANKS NOW THAT THERE IS A CEASEFIRE." ANOTHER EFFORT IS A VILLAGE-LEVEL BORAD OF APPEAL FOR THE AVERAGE CITIZEN WHO FEELS WRONGED BY CORRUPTION OR INJUSTICE. THE BOARD APPEARS TO BE GVN ORGANIZED, HAS APPEARED IN TWO VILLAGES SO FAR, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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IS COMPOSED OF VILLAGE COUNCILMEN AND NOTABLES. HOW ACTIVE IT WILL BE REMAINS TO BE SEEN, AS DOES THE CORRECTIVE ACTION IT MIGHT TAKE IN INDIVIDUAL CASES.

6. COLONEL MARSH, CHIEF OF THE CANDEL REGION V, WILL GO TO SAIGON WITHIN FEW DAYS TO WORK FOR SEC GEN OF ICCS, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY THERE ARE RUMORS HERE THAT MARSH IS BEING RELIEVED. THE ACTING CHIEF OF CADEL CALIMS THAT HE DOES NOT YET KNOW WHETHER MARSH IS BEING RELIEVED OR NOT, BUT THAT IF HE IS, THERE IS NO WORD YET ABOUT REPLACEMENT.

PART VIII: MR 4

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE RELATIVELY HEAVY. BOTH THE VC AND GVN ARE ORGANIZING FOR POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN THE AREAS THEY CONTROL. THE VC SEEM QUITE SATISFIED WITH THEIR POSITION IN VINH BINH AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO LAUNCH FURTHER OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS THERE.

2. COMBAT CONTINUED TO BE RELATIVELY HIGH WITH MR 4 REPORTING 56 INCIDENTS. DINH TUONG AND CHUONG THIEN WERE AGAIN THE MORE HARRASSED PROVINCES. DINH TUONG REPORTS RVNAF LAUNCHED A MULTI- BATTALION ENGAGEMENT SOUTH OF ROUTE 4 IN CAY LAY DISTRICT AGAINST AN ESTIMATED VC/ NVA BATTALION. THE VC/ NVA ARE SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED HEAVYLOSSES WITH A COMPANY COMMANDER BEING CAPTURED.

3. POL OFFICER, AN XUYEN, UNDERSTANDS THE VCI HAVE BEEN CONTACTING NATIONALIST POLITICAL PARTIES IN QUAN LONG (CA MAU)

URGING THEM TO JOIN " A THIRD FORCE" THE FORCE, THE VCI SAY, WOULD BE NEUTRAL, BUT WOULD BE ASKED TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNISTS WHEN ELECTIONS ARE HELD. AN XUYEN' S NATIONAL POLICE CLAIM THE NATIONALIST PARTIES HAVE REPORTED ALL VCI CONTACTS TO POLICE OFFICIALS. THE POLICE BELIEVE THE LOCAL PARTIES HAVE NO INTEREST IN JOINING A COMMUNIST INSPIRED THIRD FORCE.

4. VC POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN AN XUYEN IS CONTINUING. IN THOI BINH DISTRICT, COMMUNIST VILLAGE COMMITTEES CARRY THE NAME OF " VILLAGE GOVERNMENTS " INSTEAD OF " VILLAGE PEOPLE' S FRONTS." THE MEMBERSHIP ON THE COMMITTEES REMAINS THE SAME AS THAT OF FORMER FRONTS. ELECTIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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HELD TO MAKE THE NEW GOVERNMENTS APPEAR LEGITIMATE.

5. THE GVN HAS APPARENTLY CONCEDED POLITICAL CONTROL OF SOTHERN KIEN BIN DISTRICT, KIEN GIANG TO THE VC. BEFORE DOING SO, RVNAF USECD ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS LAST WEEK TO REMOVE SOME 200 PERSONS FROM THE AREA, RESETTLING THEM IN AREAS UNDER FIRMER GVN CONTROL. SINCE THAT TIME, VC FLAGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FLYING OVER THE CONTESTED AREA BUT KIEN GIANG PROVINCE AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED NOT TO INTERVENE.

6. ORGANIZATION OF THE GVN' S POPULAR FRONT IS CONTINUING AT PROVINCE AND VILLAGE LEVELS. DISTRICTS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN BYPASSED. THE FRONT IN BA XUYEN ALREADY CLAIMS MEMBERSHIP OF 900 NOTABLES. INCLUDED IN THE GOVERNING AND ADVISORY BOARDS ARE THEPRINCIPAL GVN PROVINCE AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS AS WELL AS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES, PROVINCE COUNCIL MEMBER S, AND VILLAGE AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS. IN KIEN PHONG, POPULAR FRONTS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED IN ALL OF THE PROVINCE' S 51 VILLAGES.

REPORTS FROM BOTH PROVINCES INDICATE THE POPULAR FRONT IDEA IS WIDELY ACCEPTED.

7. THE FSO POL OFFICER COVERING VINH BINH PREPARED THE FOLLOWING ESTIMATE OF THE VC THERE: SHORTLY AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, POLITICAL STRUGGLE BEGAN IN VINH BINH. THE VC FEEL QUITE CONFIDENT OF THEIR POSITION IN VINH BINH AND DO NOT SEE ANY NEED FOR FURTHER OFFENSIVE MILITARY OPERATIONS. EARLY DURING THE CEASEFIRE THE VC CONCENTRATED MILITARY EFFORTS IN THOSE AREAS THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD TAKE AND HOLD EASILY. THESE AREAS LIE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO TRADITIONAL BASES AND ARE HARD FOR GVN FORCES TO PENETRATE. OUTSIDE THESE AREAS, VC/ NVA FORCES HAVE ACTIVELY PATROLLED IN THE VICINITY OF KEY DISTRICT TOWNS, REMINDING THE POPULATION OF THEIR PRESENCE AND INTIMIDATING GVN OFFICIALS. THE VIET CONG INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS LARGELY INTACT THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE AND IS PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL IN TAX COLLECTION. A SPECIAL " PEACE TAX" HAS BEEN IMPOSED, REGULAR TAXES COLLECTED IN A LUMP SUM RATHER THAN IN INSTALLMENTS , AND CITIZENS WITH BACK TAX PAYMENTS FORCED TO PAY ARREARS. BUNKER

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MANILA
OTTAWA
PHNOM PENH

VIENTIANE
FRANCE
WARSAW
COMUSMACV
CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB
DANANG
NHA TRANG
BIEN HOA
CAN THO

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